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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Arbeitspapier / working paper

PROGRAMMATIC texts
No. 12, 2018

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> When they fall in love with a city it is for forever. As though there never was a time when they didn't love it. The minute they arrive at the train station or get off the ferry and glimpse the wide streets and the wasteful lamps lighting them, they know they are born for it. There, in a city, they are not so much new as themselves, their stronger, riskier selves. And in the beginning when they first arrive, and twenty years later when they and the city have grown up, they love that part of themselves so much they forget what loving other people was like – if they ever knew, that is.
>
> Toni Morrison, *Jazz*

Introduction: Urbanity beyond metrics

In the twenty-first century, the future of the world is urban. Most human organization is shifting towards urban centres. Today, some 1.7 billion people (23 per cent of the world's population) live in a city with over 1 million inhabitants (Deuskar 2015). According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in 2016, 54 per cent of the world's population resides in urban areas and most urbanization is taking place in the so-called Global South (UN-Habitat 2016, 1). Mike Davis's (2006) massively influential *Planet of Slums* paints a morbid, yet realistic, picture of one form of global urbanity that impacts large parts of the world's population primarily situated in Africa, Asia, and South America. Here urbanity is marked by dense human settlements and urban sprawls reeling from an urbanization not of choice but compulsion. Forced displacements from rural areas because of the impacts of structural adjustment programmes, land expropriations, urban joblessness, and a lack of housing and infrastructure underpin the »planet of slums«. On the other hand, the rise of globalized financial cities, such as Dubai, Singapore, or Shanghai, portrays urbanity as an image of vertical buildings with glass windows, shopping malls, densely packed populations, and financial exchange – zones of »neoliberal exception« (Ong 2007). Today, for many post-colonial states, it is not the city of their former colonizer that is an inspiration, such as London or Paris, but the post-colonial oil and finance-rich city such as Dubai or Singapore, whose aesthetic and economic success they seek to duplicate (Kana 2011).

Against the background of these various forms of planetary urbanization, contemporary explanations of urbanity often focus on metrics, such as population size and density, administrative boundaries, the presence of financial centres, infrastructure, and government services. The focus on metrics is also shaped by the ways in which modern governance (of governments and international institutions, and non-governmental organizations) has moved towards prioritizing concerns about population management within quantifiable policy and development goals (Foucault 2003 [1976]; Scott 1998) rather than focusing on participatory citizenship, which expands definitions of urbanity to include a civic consciousness by residents of a shared space. Yet whilst metrics are important in quantifying what is urban and what is not, explanations of contemporary and historic urbanity cannot stop there.

This programmatic text discusses the ways in which urbanity is experienced in different ways in different locations, time periods, and urban settings – the latter of which include the provincial town, the walled city, and the expanding urban sprawl. Tying the text together is an attempt at un-

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derstanding the ways in which urbanity is tied to a set of behaviours, feelings, and perceptions held by its inhabitants, which are shaped by governance and/or economic practices from above (laws, institutions, and in some cases international institutions) and the spatial demarcations of the city (walls, roads, and flyovers). The article starts with a theoretical discussion of the term urbanity, and is followed by a wider outline of our argument. The main sections are divided into four case studies, each of which posits how urbanity is understood as a way of life and/or shaped by sensory experiences and/or civic participation in shared space (or an amalgamation of different shared spaces). It ends with a conclusion that ties the four case studies together.

The question of urbanity

The term »urbanity« is derived from the Latin »urbs«/»urb«, which translates as »city«. Often there is also a juxtaposition of the urban with the rural: the city differs from the hinterlands in its composition, culture, and function. »Urbanus« means to *belong to the city*, which later led to the French »urbanité« and English »urbanity«. The city and urbanity are interconnected; a shared demarcated space shapes behaviour, identity, and belonging. An important body of scholarship explores how the term urbanity is connected to a communal, civic, and political consciousness – be it of the city or town (Lefevbre 2003 [1968]).

According to urban geographer David Harvey (2012), who helped rekindle the current interest in Henri Lefebvre (1968) in the Anglophone world, urbanization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is a route to capitalist expansion where cities and urban infrastructure are drains that absorb surplus capital. Yet, as for Lefebvre, for Harvey (2012) a problem arises in that these forms of urbanization often fail to allow a space for inhabitants to shape the direction of the city (that is, have a right to the city), which historically has often been an inherent part of the urban experience in many parts of the world, at least in certain periods – although this has not always been the case everywhere, nor in equal ways. The city is a site of progress, resistance, exchange, identity, and belonging, in which »man« seeks to remake her, him, or their self (Harvey 2012, 8). Civic life and »public« space, sentiments of belonging, and the emotions and sensations that the city produces are central to understanding what urbanity is.

In the Latin (and also French and English) language the terms city and citizenship have a shared and interconnected etymological root and history. James Holston and Arjun Appadurai's introduction to the influential edited journal issue of *Public Culture* (1996) leads with the relationship between cities and citizenship in twentieth-century South America, Africa, and Asia. For Holston and Appadurai (1996) the modern nation state, including the »non-Western« and/or post-colonial nation state, has sought to »dismantle the historic primacy of urban citizenship and replace it with the national«, yet despite this »cities remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship« (188). »Place remains fundamental to the problems of membership in society« and »cities are especially privileged sites for considering the renegotiations of citizenship« (188–189). However, some scholars ask if citizenship was ever fully enacted in the post-colonial state in ways that are comparable to the Western metropole (Chatterji 2013), whilst others argue that citizenship is an alien concept to the subaltern classes (Chatterjee 2004). In *Politics of the Governed* (2004), Partha Chatterjee uncovers how, in the post-colonial state and city, citizenship is not experienced in equal ways by all the inhabitants of a city. Chatterjee focuses on the urban poor in India and uncovers how, in deeply unequal cities, individuals and groups instead engage in practices of belonging and claims making through alternative routes: a form of »political society«. This is echoed in Asef Bayat's *Street Politics* (1997) and *Life as Politics* (2010), which centre on the urban poor in the Middle East. In both of these works individuals and groups do not become citizens per se, but the spatial, social, political, and economic configurations of the city allow a form of »street politics« (Bayat 1997, 2010) or »political society« (Chatterjee 2004) that permit a demand for rights to the city to be articulated and enacted – albeit in a way that differs from the »right to the city« and from conceptualizations of public space as articulated by Lefebvre (1968) and Harvey (2012). Consider, for example, that in Bayat and Chatterjee's urban slums, so-called public spaces (streets, alleyways, railway lines) are sites of both the public and private, in contrast to understandings of public and private space in Eurocentric thought. As the state fails to provide inhabitants with the rights to which they are entitled, the poor redefine »public« spaces by drying their washing, bathing, and defecating there. A similar argument is made by Salwa Ismail (2006) with regard to »informal« quarters, which people organize themselves, while their interaction with the state is increasingly framed in a security perspective.

Are these spaces indicative of an alternative »urbanity«? Or should we search for better terminologies to understand the »non-Western« urbanite? For Saskia Sassen (2005) a new term is needed. Sassen asks whether »urbanity« is a relevant analytical tool given that urbanity is too closely linked to the Western world. Instead »cityness«, Sassen proposes, is a more appropriate term to use. In this programmatic text, however, urbanity remains a stubbornly persistent term in use. In the sections on Pakistan and Jeddah, the conceptualization of »urbanity« as a set of behaviours, opportunities,

and ways of living, especially when compared with the rural, remain ever present. Meanwhile, in the case study based on the nineteenth-century Ottoman cities of Aleppo, Tunis, and Cairo, urbanity is marked by a civic and moral contract between local notables and ordinary residents on shared public issues. In all the case studies, which are based in the contemporary and historical »non-Western« world, the equivalent terms for urbanity in local vernaculars are associated with a type of behaviour and way of life, some of which include a »civic« life. As such, whilst the text interrogates and complicates the term »urbanity« it does not do away with it and replace it with »cityness«. Indeed, urbanity remains ever relevant. The idea of the city having a »public« space and thereby »civic sphere«/form of urbanity applies more widely than clichés about so-called »Western« versus »non-Western« qualities suggest. Although, for Sassen, the term »cityness« may be a more adequate term to use, this programmatic text shows that urbanity is and was in no way an exclusively »Western« concept.

In addition, as a significant part of the world's contemporary urbanization is taking place in smaller-sized settlements and/or in areas that are administratively categorized as rural, cityness itself is a limiting term. Nearly half of the world's urban populations live in settlements with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants and most of the world's fastest-growing cities are not megacities but small- to medium-sized cities (UN-Habitat 2016). As planetary urbanization becomes the norm, then, the need to disaggregate between the different forms of urbanity that are produced in the town, the provincial city, the city, and, increasingly, the megacity becomes even more pertinent. Urbanity itself is a relational term. In an overwhelmingly rural context, even a smallish town can have urban properties, as the case study on the provincial town of Odienné reveals. While what was formerly a city in terms of size and function is nowadays often bypassed in discussions of urbanity fascinated by old and new megacities. There is then a need to complicate understandings of urbanity. There is also a need to understand how urbanity is understood in similar and different ways across time and space; this is, in part, what the authors here seek to do.

For another set of scholars, following Alain Corbin (1982), urbanity is not just about civic participation, political society, or the politics of the ordinary. Instead urbanity is understood by the experience and sensations it evokes – the smells, sounds, and touch. Victoria Henshaw's (2013) *Urban Smellscapes* uncovers the ways in which smell environments are central to urban planning and what type of city urban planners want to produce. For others, the city is a site of stimulation, anonymity, and quick frequencies of exchange that are replicated in a concentrated space and do not take place in the hinterlands (Simmel 1971 [1903]). Whilst civic space and political participation are important, how is urbanity defined by the emotional, imaginative, and sensory responses it creates? In this text Chappatte's case study on Odienné reveals how temporality shapes how urban life is experienced – the town at night is not the same as the town in the day and creates a different set of perceptions in residents – while Alimia, Freitag and Lafi reveal how residents attach and identify themselves to the city. Thomas Blom Hansen and Oskar Verkaaik (2009) go further and discuss the idea that the city itself possesses an urban charisma. This is not easy to quantify, but for Blom Hansen and Verkaaik the city is a living organism that passes its own charisma on to residents and shapes their identity and attachment to a particular type of urbanity. How urbanity is experienced also varies vastly along the intersections of class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, and the like. Yet even amongst these groups urbanity appears to be a lived experience, made possible through a series of acts and behaviours within a given and particularly organized space.

An overview

This programmatic text is a dialogue between two historians, a political scientist, and an anthropologist, and puts forward a multidisciplinary perspective of understanding urbanity. We step beyond urbanity as a simple measure of metrics. We draw from historical and contemporary research in twenty-first century Odienné (Côte d'Ivoire) and Peshawar (Pakistan), nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jeddah (contemporary Saudi Arabia), and nineteenth-century Tunis (contemporary Tunisia), Aleppo (contemporary Syria), Cairo (contemporary Egypt), and Tripoli (contemporary Libya) to ask how urbanity is measured, lived, and/or felt in each of these research sites. We do not propose a positivistic and universal template that explains what urbanity is in a quantifiable form. Indeed, it is doubtful if there exists one universal model of urbanity. Rather, the study details why there appear to be multiple types of urbanities that vary over time and space, some of which are disconnected from the rural and others less so. Today, with the intensification of globalization and the urbanization of the rural, the lines between the so-called rural and urban are eroding. Yet the article does offer a common thread in drawing out the ways in which urbanity is connected to a way of life, feeling, and being and insists that different urbanities are locally perceived and need to be recognized as such rather than subsumed under one model if we want to do justice to the amazing multitude of historical and regional urban experiences.

Sanaa Alimia's work on Peshawar uncovers how some residents of the city describe Peshawar itself as having a habitus. The city is understood as a

living entity whose charisma also filters down to its inhabitants (Blom Hansen and Verkaaik 2009). Ulrike Freitag's research on Jeddah uncovers the relationship between space and urban belonging. Focusing on the walled city, Freitag shows the presence of a bounded urbanity that is defined by particularly urbane activities and behaviours. André Chappatte's work on the provincial town of Odienné explores a phenomenology of the urban night. It demonstrates that the ethnographic experience of urbanity is also shaped by temporality, namely the differences between the nocturnal and diurnal socio-sensorium. Nora Lafi's research on the Ottoman cities of Tunis, Cairo, Aleppo, and Tripoli explains how urbanity is defined by the production of civic politics and spaces.

Peshawar: Pakistan's north-western city of charisma // *Sanaa Alimia*

Drawing from fieldwork conducted in Peshawar in north-west Pakistan in this section the concept of »urban charisma« is used, as developed by Blom Hansen and Verkaaik (2009), to argue that urbanity is more than the metrics of space, population size, density, infrastructure, and capital exchange. Urbanity is also understood as a *way of being*, which applies to the inhabitants of the urban space in question *and the urban space itself*. *Urbanity* is an expression about the city itself and its inhabitants.

Urbanity: the shehr, the ruralopolis, or globalization?

In Urdu and Pashto there is no direct word for »urban«; the closest is city, *shehr* (derived from Persian). Similarly, the closest word for urbanity is *shehri*, which translates more accurately as »to be of the city« and/or »citizen«. In Pakistan, the city and the urban are synonymous with each other. Furthermore, the term *shehr* leads to *shehriyat*, which translates as »citizenship« and shows how understandings of the city are linked to a relationship between place, the state, and government control. The word *shehri* also implies a type of behaviour or a way of life that is inextricably tied to the *city* and juxtaposed with imaginings of rural life – the village (*kale* in Pashto; *gaon* in Urdu). The history of the terms *shehr*, *shehri*, *shehriyat* was shaped by a number of factors, including the long period of urbanity in the Indo-Persian worlds dominated by agricultural societies and some key urban centres that were home to state institutions, political power, and trade. In pre-colonial Central/South Asia, cities such as Peshawar, akin to the following described example of Ottoman Jeddah, were spatially separated from rural areas by walls and gates.

In twenty-first-century Peshawar, the pre-colonial city boundaries still exist, but the city has also been transformed through expansion away from the former centre. The pre-colonial city is now referred to as the inner city, *andrhoon shehr*, whilst the word *shehr* now encapsulates the bigger, newer city, and by new forms of urbanity that are shaped by modernization and a deeper penetration of capitalism in economic and social relations. Urbanization is rapidly transforming Pakistan. The country has the fastest urbanization rate in South Asia at 3 per cent per annum, and it is expected that by 2025, 50 per cent of Pakistanis will live in urban centres (Kugelman 2014, 2). Pakistan is home to two of the world's megacities: Karachi, which has a population of some 24 million persons and a population density of 17,325 persons per square kilometre – the highest in the world after Dhaka and Mumbai (Hasan and Raza 2012, 2) – and Lahore, which has a population of 12 million. In the popular imagination in Pakistan it is the big city or the megacity that demands attention. Literature, television dramas, film, and political commentary concentrate on Karachi and Lahore and, to lesser degrees, on Islamabad and Rawalpindi (twin cities) and Peshawar.

Yet much of Pakistan's urban growth is not situated in the city or megacity but in medium-sized urban settlements. Urbanization is not simply about big cities getting bigger. It is also about the growth of increasingly population-dense rural regions – areas that are not officially designated as city spaces but nonetheless have many of the trappings of urban life (Qadeer 2014). Building on the definitions of urbanity outlined by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) and UN-Habitat, who define urban places as those that have a density of at least 400 persons per square kilometre (1,000 persons per square mile), along with a stipulated minimum population, Muhammad Qadeer (2014) says vast swaths of what are administratively categorized as rural areas in Pakistan should be regarded as urban or, in his words, »ruralopolises«. In fact, if population density is a marker of urbanity, Pakistan is 60 to 65 per cent urban: »density makes Pakistan a predominantly urban country« (Qadeer 2014, 23).

In addition, globalization is also blurring the lines between the rural and the urban, the local, regional, and the international. Often definitions of urbanity offer simple juxtapositions of the »urban« with the »rural«; the latter is itself rooted in the assumption that rural societies and economies are left untouched by urbanization and globalization. In the twenty-first century the deeper penetration of capitalism, migration, telecommunications, and the Internet are transforming understandings of rural and urban life. According to Brenner and Schmid (2011, 11), terms such as »the city« are now obsolete. Planetary urbanization means,

> paradoxically, that even spaces that lie well beyond the traditional city cores and suburban peripheries – from transoceanic shipping lanes,

> transcontinental highway and railway networks, and worldwide communications infrastructures to alpine and coastal tourist enclaves, »nature« parks, offshore financial centers, agro-industrial catchment zones and erstwhile »natural« spaces such as the world's oceans, deserts, jungles, mountain ranges, tundra, and atmosphere – have become integral parts of the worldwide urban fabric.

Qadeer (2014, 24–25) adds:

> [E]lectricity, cell phones, medicines, tubewells, vans, and motorcycles have all penetrated into the remote parts of Pakistan. Farming is now a commercial enterprise dependent on international commodity prices and technological inputs. Millions of rural households circulate between cities and villages; large numbers have migrated to cities. Some are woven into global networks.

Yet the mere introduction of new technologies as a determining factor of planetary urbanization may be a stretch of the concept of urbanity and runs the risk of dissolving a nuanced understanding of urbanity.

In Pakistan it is also notable that rural migrants who return from other countries are not referred to as *shehri* but are instead »worldly«, having returned from a foreign land or »outside« (*bahir*). To be an urbanite is still understood as being quite distinct from a global migrant. An urbanite must still be connected to the city and an urban way of life. Whilst rural spaces are becoming more densely populated and developing new road networks, infrastructure, and education facilities, and whilst new cities are forming, often these places are not accepted as being »authentically« urban in the popular imagination, public discourse, and daily vernacular. Why is this the case? This will be now discussed through the example of Peshawar and the concept of »urban charisma« (Hansen and Verkaaik 2009).

Peshawar as a city of charisma

Cities, it is argued, have souls. One often finds references to cities as organic, living, and breathing entities.

In Peshawar, a newly built flyover for motor vehicles has become a popular leisure spot, where young men, families, and even elders come out to »see« and »feel« Peshawar. The flyover sits on the entry/exit of the upper-middle-/middle-class neighbourhood of Hayatabad. Usually nearing *maghrib* (sunset) and in the late evening, groups of people (young men and/or chaperoned women who are with a male guardian) can be seen driving up to the highest point of the flyover on motorbikes, or in cars, vans, taxis, or rickshaws, whilst others walk up. Young street vendors come along selling balloons, sweets, and snacks, some music can be heard playing in the background as people absorb the city view as a form of leisure. Selfies are being taken against the city skyline. On the other side of the flyover are the mountains of the Khyber Agency, but barely anyone takes selfies on that side and no cars pull up there. Residents are not looking to the rural areas, but to the city. The leisure activities and the view of the city allow individuals and groups to feel and visualize urbanity. The view exposes (the imagined) millions of anonymous individuals and families, neighbourhoods, spaces, and experience that make up Peshawar's urbanity.

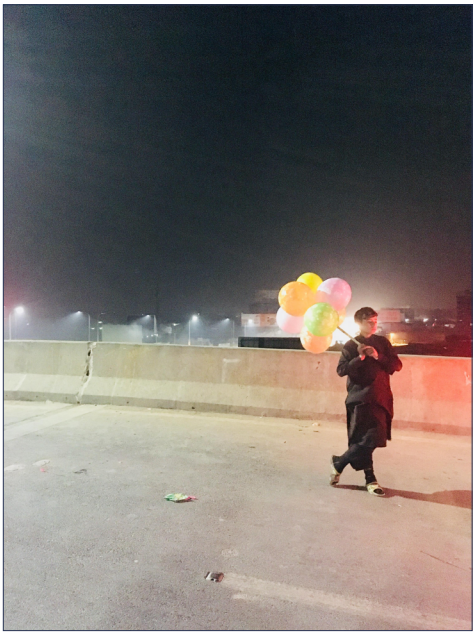

Figure 1: Street vendor selling balloons on the flyover. Image: Sanaa Alimia

In Pakistan, Peshawar is seen as a provincial city when compared to the bright lights and infrastructure of Karachi or Lahore. But within the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA),[1] and the neighbouring Afghanistan region, the city is understood as an authentic centre of urbanity. A common Pashto phrase used to describe the city is »*Pekhawar kho Pekhawar de kana*«/»Peshawar is Peshawar«, a reference to the fact that nowhere really compares to Peshawar. Often Peshawar is referred to by residents as having »character«, »heart«, or »life«. The city has its own habitus. Using the example of Karachi, Blom Hansen and Verkaaik (2009) refer to these processes of understanding the city as a reflection of »urban charisma«. Urban charisma is shaped first by a »mythology that is emitted *from* its buildings, infrastructure, the historicity of its sites and its anonymous crowds« and, secondly, is to be found *in* the city, »in its crowds, in the styles and, reputations of its people, their knowledge,

1 Until May 2018, FATA was a separate administrative district, but at that time it was merged with KP.

and the special skills and extraordinary acts the city enables and necessitates« (Blom Hansen and Verkaaik 2009, 6).

Peshawar is the provincial capital of KP. The city sits on the famous Silk Route and has historically been an essential dry trade port towards Afghanistan and Central Asia. It is a magnet for local and regional migration and has undergone significant changes in the past 40 years. In 1998 the city's population density was 720.6 persons per square kilometre, whilst by 2013 it was estimated to be 2,716 (IGC 2014, 133). On the one hand, the city's population growth and increased urbanization is underpinned by natural population increases and economic growth. On the other, it is also shaped by rural-to-urban migration; Afghan forced migrations (Alimia 2019, forthcoming); new waves of displaced persons from ecological disasters, such as the 2010 floods, and from military and drone operations in FATA and KP; and return labour migrations from the Gulf Arab states and Pakistani cities.

Peshawar's urbanity is also being transformed through the emergence of a new middle class that has greater purchasing power, larger disposable incomes, and greater political influence than in the past – it is speculated the flyover was built by the provincial government of the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) as a way of securing the middle-class vote bank of Hayatabad residents, where a large proportion of the city's wealth resides. The Peshawar–Islamabad motorway route, which was opened in 2007, also cut travel times in half and brought residents closer to the better-developed cities of Islamabad and Lahore. Many middle-class residents frequently move between Peshawar and Islamabad on day trips, for work, or to stay with relatives. An exposure to what is available in Islamabad (food, leisure, and shopping) is creating a demand by those with purchasing power for these to be available in Peshawar and is transforming the city. Similar dynamics are also at play for individuals and groups who travel to and return from work in the Gulf Arab states. On return these individuals and groups want to transform their city to meet an »international« standard. Peshawar thus has its own aspirations towards the modern neoliberal city, which is being driven both from above and below. This seen via the shopping malls and retail plazas built in modern architectural styles (see Khadi on University Road or Deans Plaza in Saddar), coffee shops, Pakistani and international chain restaurants (Shezan, Pizza Hut), new suburban housing schemes, and links to multinational banks and the state.

Yet much of Peshawar's urban charisma is shaped by its history as an ancient city in South Asia and its contemporary significance within Pakistan and the wider region. Years of accumulated cultural, political, and historical capital of »urbanity« have given Peshawar an urban soul that is not (yet) present in the newly emerging towns, cities, or what Qadeer calls »ruralopolises« in the wider KP and FATA region, such as Swabi or Nowshera. In Pakistan's north-west, it is Peshawar, over and above any other small or new cities, that can be understood as having urban charisma and an authentic urbanity. Why is this the case?

First, like most pre-colonial cities in Central and South Asia (Kabul, Delhi, Lahore, Multan), Peshawar's original city consisted of a walled urban settlement, *andrhoon shehr* (»inner city«) or the »old city«. *Andrhoon shehr* hosts a plethora of monuments and bazaars – from the Sikh emperor Ranjit Singh's Bala Hisar Fort, to the infamous Qissa Khawani bazaar (storytellers market), to Sonehri (Golden) Mosque. In addition, buildings constructed in the British colonial era, such as Gora Kabristan (a graveyard where English colonialists were buried – it translates literally as »white« graveyard), or Islamia College in University Town, layer Peshawar's history.

Secondly, much of Peshawar's position as a »city« with an urbanite class is related to the fact the old city was, at least until the independence and partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947, predominantly home to cosmopolitan trading populations, including a sizeable urbanized Hindko population and colonized elites. Whilst KP, FATA, and Peshawar are understood as being »Pashtun« spaces, historically the inner city was a cosmopolitan space that was not dominated by Pashtuns, who were often considered rural/»tribal« peoples – although a number of historians have urged a more complex understanding of »Pashtun« identities and their interconnections to both rural and urban life (Hanifi 2016).

Thirdly, the perception Peshawar has urban charisma is also informed by how the city is remembered and placed in historical and contemporary narratives, as well as memories of the city in art, poetry, and writings. In a well-known (2014) contemporary music video made by the singers Yasir and Jawad, two students from the University of Peshawar, viewers hear the lyrics of Pashtun poet Ghani Khan playing in the background and are taken through pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial historical landmarks of Peshawar and some activities for which the city is known. One sees the Mughal-built walls and gates of the walled city, as well as people shopping in Saddar bazaar, eating chapli kebabs in the *namak mandi* (salt market), and walking in the grounds of the University of Peshawar. The video shows how Peshawar's monuments exude memory and soul, how these sites are remembered today, and how links to a past urban life give the city its particular character.

Fourthly, Peshawar's urban charisma is related to its people and the sensations that the city

evokes. Frequent exchanges, experiences, and movement are central to urbanity. Simmel (1903) alerts us to the intensification of nervous stimulation in the capitalist metropolis (cited in Blom Hansen and Verkaaik 2009, 6). »Urbanity« is not just about population size, density, and administrative boundaries. It is also related to the intense sensory and emotional bonds that a city evokes. The emotions, smells, sounds, and sights of food being cooked in the streets, street hawkers, frequent movement, fear, anonymity, and excitement. The city and the urbanity it produces is not something that can simply be explained through a set of metrics, but must be experienced and lived. This is not easy to quantify, but these expressions and sentiments of urbanity tell us something that the metrics seem to miss: senses and emotions are central to understanding urbanity.

»The new cities are not cities!«

Younus Afridi is a 35-year-old man who was originally from Khyber Agency, one of the seven tribal agencies of (then) FATA. I conducted semi-structured interviews with Younus in Peshawar during 2014–2016. FATA borders Afghanistan and the KP province and, at the time of my research, was not fully subject to Pakistan state laws. The areas were governed by an outdated British colonial law (the 1901 Frontier Crimes Regulation FCR), which is based on a logic of so-called non-intervention and collective punishment, and which was only overturned in May 2018. FATA is known for being one of the most underdeveloped areas in Pakistan; this is underpinned by its colonially inherited state of legal exception, the structures of ethno-federal discrimination that shape the Pakistani state, and the impacts of global geopolitical wars (the Soviet–Afghan War and the current »War on Terror«).

Younus moved to Peshawar with his wife and daughter in search of work and for access to health care – his daughter has a chronic illness and Peshawar offered them an array of government and private health-care facilities. Today he works as a driver and his job means that he travels across Peshawar and in some cases also to Islamabad and Rawalpindi, the twin cities, which are some two to three hours away from Peshawar.

In the Khyber Agency various areas are defined as urban by the government in administrative terms (*tehsils* or city areas) and include shops, trade, medical and education facilities, and government and state offices. Notably, FATA has a long history of containing key trading and transport sites for the region. And in recent years the Pakistan military, sponsored by the US State Department in the context of the so-called War on Terror, has engaged in a number of road construction, education, and health-care projects in FATA. Yet for Younus, none of Khyber Agency is »*really urban*« (his emphasis). Younus referred to the main urban centres near his village simply as the »centre« but reserved his use of *shehr* (city) for Peshawar, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi. In the neighbouring KP province a number of formerly rural areas are becoming more and more urban. Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, and Nowshera are all examples of towns and cities whose urban character has grown in the 2000s and 2010s. Yet, again akin to the examples of FATA, none of these areas are considered to be cities or to possess an authentic »urbanity« in the same way Peshawar does. Younus explained this to me:

> Peshawar is a city. It is not like tribal areas or the village [*kale*]. In Peshawar, I can get access to a good doctor, to a job, to education. But in Khyber, I cannot. Here there are people who we are not a part of our tribe [*qabile*], there are many different people … There is education and the universities. The roads are so good … The new flyover lets you see the whole city … you can see the lights and watch the whole city, alive.

Younus also said, »Peshawar is a city, the new cities are not cities!« For him, Peshawar allows access to basic urban features (health care, education, and work infrastructures). Yet the city is also »alive«. The city has its own soul. The city awakens senses and emotions in Younus. The city is also defined by anonymous social relations and its diverse inhabitants. In Peshawar, urbanity enables leisure and anonymity away from social structures and norms that are still present in smaller towns and cities. Younus and his wife use the city as a space of leisure through consumption (visiting an ice cream parlour or a restaurant) or via a walk along the flyover or in the public parks that dot local neighbourhoods. The city also allows him and his wife to access health care for their child. On the flyover, he is able to see and experience the various atomized parts of the city that allow him to feel a part of something »bigger«.

Urbanity in Pakistan, then, is, of course, associated with population size and density, the exchange of goods and capital, the ability to access resources, and infrastructures – what one could call the traditional metrics of understanding the city. Yet urbanity also moves beyond these metrics. It is linked to emotional, sensory, visual, and intellectual sensations produced both by the urban space itself and the people who inhabit the city. As Younus explains to me, Peshawar »is alive«.

The spatial dimension of urbanity: al-Balad, the walled town of Jeddah, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries // *Ulrike Freitag*

Reflecting on what the notion of urbanity might have meant in the nineteenth/early twentieth-century Ottoman port city of Jeddah, there are

striking similarities with the notion of *shehr* in the Pakistani context already described. In the nineteenth century, Jeddah was a major administrative centre as well as the main Red Sea port of the Hijaz region. Its specific importance derived from its role as an entrepot in the trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, as well as serving as a major distributive centre for goods in the Red Sea area and on the western Arabian Peninsula. Locally it was called »*balad*« or simply »city«, a term also used for Mecca in the Koran.[2] It was thus a *madina*, the Arabic equivalent of *shehr*, a term which implies that it, or rather its inhabitants, were characterized by a certain civility (*madaniyya*) and culture lacking in the surrounding areas. Even if the term *madaniyya* has taken on new meanings linked to modern notions of »civilization« since the late nineteenth century, it is precisely because its roots reflect a specific urban culture that this term was used by both Arab and Ottoman writers (Buzpınar 2007; Freitag 2008).

But how did urbanity express itself? The main argument of this section is that there are strong spatial as well as time-related dimensions to this concept. This is obvious from the clear demarcation of what was and what was not considered to be urban territory. However, it would be wrong to assume that urbanity was experienced equally everywhere and at all times within that space.

The stark contrast between city and countryside has been made famous by the fourteenth-century North African writer Ibn Khaldun, who developed this into a whole theory of settled versus nomadic people in his Muqaddima of 1377 (Ibn Khaldun 1957, chs 2–5). Writings about Jeddah, both by local historians as well as by colonial officials, seem to echo Khaldunian notions of considering the world outside of Jeddah's walls wild and dangerous territory. The city gates were only opened during daytime, from the first call for prayer at sunrise until the last one, about two hours after sunset. This notwithstanding, this wall – historically speaking – was as much a symbolic as a real divide: travellers often reported on its bad state of repair, with parts even derelict, and the Ottoman government undertook major repairs in the 1880s.

Quite apart from its actual defensive function, which the wall of Jeddah last fulfilled during the Saudi siege in 1925, the wall defined, until its demolition in 1947, who was considered to be a person from Jeddah, that is, a Jiddawi. Even today, the names of the families living within the wall are recounted and considered locally important markers of belonging. They are not only listed in local histories but also circulate on WhatsApp groups of local intellectuals, who thereby express their attachment to and concern for Jeddah's urban identity. They are also repeated on officially sanctioned websites, often based on local histories such as the one by M. Y. Ṭrābulsī (2008, 83–94). Partly in conjunction with local and national attempts at conserving the urban heritage in the area which became a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *World Heritage Site* in 2014, houses are marked with the names of their former owners or prominent inhabitants. More recently, some families have started to restore their houses in the old town, nowadays inhabited mainly by poor migrant labourers, as a sign that they belong to the old families and are true Jiddawis. In spite of significant difference in status and wealth, living within the confines of the walls counted as a qualifier of one's urbanity. A big question remains as to when one became a Jiddawi. Birth does not seem to have been the decisive question, but rather the period of residence, and possibly burial, although this would warrant further exploration.

No matter whether all living within the confines of the wall were accepted universally as urbanites or not, the notion of urban dwellers excluded the inhabitants of the villages and suburbs that sprang up outside of the town, notably from the nineteenth century. Their inhabitants were fishermen, agriculturalists, owners of camels and cisterns, but also casual labourers, mostly depending on work in the town or trade with the townspeople. However, even having a regular occupation within the town did not suffice for one to be considered a true urbanite, at least until, after the Second World War, new and prestigious quarters developed outside, to which the more affluent families started to move (Maneval 2015, 38–46).

It should be noted, however, that when the sense of a special urban identity is discussed in the following, this leaves out an important aspect of Jiddawi life: the city's very existence was based on its strategic location as a port of Mecca. Its economy depended entirely on the maritime connections within and beyond the Red Sea, on the one hand, and with Mecca and Medina, the destinations of pilgrims, on the other. Furthermore, many of Jeddah's vital water resources, as well as its food supplies, were located in the surrounding countryside. The discussion of urbanity thus needs to be placed within this wider context; however, this is not the topic of this programmatic text.

Living with religion: the daily and yearly rhythm

The rhythm of life in *al-Balad* was very much marked by day and night, punctuated by the five prayers which determined the rhythm of life.[3] The morning call for the dawn prayer (*ṣalāt al-fajr*)

2 The Koran makes explicit reference to cities, and the term, in *Ṣūrat al-Balad*.

3 The following is based on interviews with elderly inhabitants in Jeddah between 2006 and 2016, as well as on the works by local historians Anṣārī (1980), Bakur (2013), Kābilī

marked the beginning of the day. After ablutions and prayer, and possibly a quick breakfast or cup of coffee in one of the coffeehouses, men headed for their work, be it in some workshop, at the harbour, or in the merchant office, which was often housed on the ground floor of big merchant houses (Kābilī 2004, 25). After the noon prayer (*dhuhr*), many either went back to work until the afternoon prayer (*ʿaṣr*) or headed home some time before that prayer for lunch. The *ʿaṣr* prayer ushered in a period of socializing, consisting of mutual visits by heavily covered women to each other's houses while the men headed for the *mirkāz*, the seating areas outside important houses or in the squares of their quarters. These *marākiz* (pl. of *mirkāz*) sometimes also developed into small neighbourhood coffee shops. Here, the men would meet their *shilla*, their regular group of friends, for an exchange of news and gossip, for a shared water-pipe or a game of backgammon or chess. Sometimes, a storyteller would also come by. This period of socializing was only interrupted by the *maghrib* prayer, performed at sunset, but usually ended with the evening prayer (*ʿishāʾ*) after which people went home and usually to bed. Others might have spent their leisure time outside of the city, walking or playing a game resembling the French boules. The ladies, meanwhile, spent most of their days at home, tending to the household and children, but also working at less public professions such as tailors, hairdressers, medical and spiritual consultants, and so on. An exception was the poor, often living outside of the wall, who came to city houses as washerwomen, cleaners, water carriers, and so on.

Visiting was particularly intensive during Friday afternoon, when families might also have headed to the seaside for a picnic and some fresh air. Women, although more restricted than men, at times also organized their separate outings to the seaside. They visited local shrines together, while the urban carnival of al-Qays was an entirely female affair (Nasr and Bagader 2001; Freitag 2014). Meanwhile, during holidays, such as the end of Ramadan, an elaborate protocol governed mutual visits of the inhabitants of one quarter to those of another. Religious holidays, but also life-cycle celebrations, warranted other rituals and celebrations, often uniting members of specific neighbourhoods and quarters (*ḥāra* or *maḥalla*) and reinforcing communal bonds beyond the immediate or wider family (Ṭrābulsī 2008, 179–206).

At other times, it seems that the entire male population of the city assembled. This was on such ceremonial occasions as the arrival or departure of the Ottoman officials or of the Sharifs of Mecca. One other festive city-wide popular occasion was the arrival of the Egyptian *maḥmal*, the decorated litter containing the new cover (*kiswa*) of the Kaʿba. Photographs show how people from all over Jeddah would gather at the harbour to witness its unloading and accompany it in a procession to the Medina gate and around the city to the Mecca road. Urban politics, however, were conducted by select notables, who resided in different quarters and came together on various administrative councils and other occasions.

The complications of mobility within the city

Moving across town, usually on foot, was not a trivial affair, notably for boys and young men, which serves to demonstrate that even within a particular gender different stages in the life cycle mitigated the urban experience. Given that the city measured about 800 by 1,000 metres, this was not a restriction of distance. People very much lived in their own quarters, although the borders of these quarters were not marked by walls or gates. Within the quarter, the men socialized in the squares and in the aforementioned *mirkāz*. Women visited each other in their houses and tended to stay in the neighbourhood. Young men were an important part of what today might be called an informal neighbourhood watch and were more formally involved in representing the quarter on the occasion of religious festivals or marriages. These could lead, at times, to violent confrontations between youth of different quarters, notably if processions (as with marriages) were involved (Freitag 2016).

Adults would, of course, travel to their places of work, usually in the markets or at the harbour. However, for a young boy to cross town involved moving into another quarter. An old man of about 80 told me that he had to cross from Ḥārat al-Baḥr, the »Quarter of the Sea« in the south of Jeddah, to his school, the Madrasa Rüşdiyya, in the »Northern Quarter« on a daily basis. In doing so, he had to stick to the main thoroughfares, as any diversion into the smaller alleyways would have resulted in a confrontation with peers from this quarter and his – usually violent – eviction.

The city and the stranger: urban encounters

How does this tight social control square with the presence of many foreigners, resulting from the city's role as the »gate« or »reception room« (*dihlīz*) of Mecca, as locals like to call their city? After all, thousands of pilgrims passed through it and until the 1960s often stayed days, weeks, or even months between their arrival/departure and the onward journey to Mecca and sometimes Medina. Many Jiddawis rented their houses either partly or in their entirety to these pilgrims during the pilgrimage season. Countless stories recall different types of interaction. For example, the large Jamjūm house in the old town, one wing of which was regularly rented out, had a terrace in front. In the

(2004), Mannāʿ (2011), Raqqām (2013), and Ṭrābulsī (2008), who recount episodes of daily life.

evenings, the lodgers, mostly hailing from north-east Africa, seem to have gathered there to tell stories to each other, but also to passers-by, leading to the designation of this space as »Dakkat al-Shanāqiṭa« (the Bench of the People from Shinqīṭ). Others have stories of how pilgrims sleeping rough were invited into houses by hospitable ladies.

In addition to the pilgrims, the city regularly accommodated merchants and seamen from abroad. Over the years, many foreigners settled there and fairly easily intermarried with local women. This has caused more tribally aware Saudis from the interior to derogatorily call people in the Hijaz »spit of the sea« (*ṭurshat al-baḥr*), although Jiddawis proudly stress their cosmopolitan history.

The answer to the question seems to be linked to different spatialities. The port area, the markets, as well as certain spaces in and outside of the Mecca gate (as well as probably the other city gates as well), were areas in which locals and foreigners mixed quite freely, both in official interactions from trade to bureaucracy, as well as, potentially, socially. Thus, there were coffee shops and restaurants catering to locals and foreigners alike. In contrast, the smaller coffeehouses, which could be found in some of the squares, were principally for inhabitants of the quarters.

Before the advent of hotels in the early twentieth century, foreigners had a range of options regarding their residence. Merchants could stay in the house of their business partners or in their *ḥawsh* (lit. courtyard, but often resembling *wikāla*s or caravanserais). Pilgrims regularly rented rooms either directly from or mediated by their pilgrim guides. While some guides are said to have kept complete houses or wings of houses for pilgrims, many families seasonally moved within their houses to vacate the lower floors for the visitors and thus earn a much-needed seasonal extra income. Poorer pilgrims could resort to *ribāṭ*s or pilgrims' hostels, which were organized on regional grounds. Thus, there was a special *ribāṭ* for Somalis, while others were established by well-known Indian or Hadhrami benefactors and thus most likely catered to poor pilgrims from those countries. Finally, pilgrims could camp in local squares, such as is said about the Sudanese whose pilgrim guide had an agreement with the northern quarter (interview Muḥammad Raqqām, Jeddah, 13 March 2011).

Thus, the city was inhabited by strangers for a good part of the year. However, it was crucial that such strangers were introduced through pilgrim guides, to ensure the encounters were in some way legitimized, mediated, and routinized through a well-established institution. Obviously, there were exceptions, and pilgrims could be found wandering the streets somewhat lost or sleeping rough. Thus, there are stories about how women took pity on such pilgrims and gave them shelter and food. Nevertheless, these encounters were still framed by the pilgrimage and the well-remunerated duty to protect and cater for the »guest of the House of God« (*ḍuyūf bayt Allāh al-ḥarām*) in the »entrance-hall of Mecca«.

Reflection on the urbanity of Jeddah

The preceding reflections are by no means a full-fledged or complete exploration of phenomena related to urbanity in Jeddah. However, they show a crucial tension between ethnic diversity and the presence of strangers in the town and a quite rigidly ordered social space with clear boundaries for behaviour and movement. It is probably precisely this order which allowed for the accommodation of foreigners during the pilgrim and merchant seasons. An important overall bond was surely the common religion – it provided the moral rationale for the pilgrims' presence and friendly reception (apart from the economic need). It also allowed for the relatively easy absorption of foreign merchants through intermarriage Jiddawi society.

Jeddah was not only legally a city, marked by a Friday mosque, a market, and a court. It also housed a number of important administrative as well as military installations in or – in the case of the barracks – just outside the city walls. Hence it was a place clearly associated with the *dawla*, the state, in spite of not being a legal entity in its own right but the centre of one of the three administrative units of the Ottoman province of the Hijaz at the end of the nineteenth century.[4]

More important than a legal definition was a distinct sense of difference from the surrounding areas. The city, *madīna*, was linked to a specific sense of civility, *madaniyya*, expressed in behaviour, dress, and cuisine (Yamani 2004), but also to ways of interacting as described. A sense of cosmopolitanism and pride in diversity, mostly linked to the hajj, is an integral part of locally specific connotations of *madaniyya*. Besides different people, the presence of a variety of crafts and trades, and hence also goods, as well as probably government services, was another important marker of urban life as compared to the countryside.

This does not preclude the fact that, in daily reality, the encounters with diverse peoples and with strangers followed strict rules. In many ways, individual quarters with their tight social control and cohesion can probably be compared to villages. At the same time, the city offered specific spaces for institutionalized encounters, such as the port, market, and central mosques, as well as institutions to accommodate strangers. The spatial order had a strong temporal aspect: even houses, in their entirety or in part, could be open to complete

4 These units changed fairly frequently, but the main principle remained the same.

strangers in the season of hajj, based on the introduction of the strangers – legitimized as brothers in religion – through pilgrim guides. Specific political and economic institutions, such as city councils and guilds, as well as social customs, organized the cohabitation of the different spatial units within the city walls. Perhaps the urban entity was best visible from outside, when approaching the walled city and passing through its gates. From the inside, there was certainly a strong sense of distance vis-à-vis those from outside the city wall, enhanced by the shared cultural norms of those inside.

There is little literature reflecting specifically how Jiddawis in earlier days felt about their city and how they experienced its urbanity. However, the fast-growing genre of local histories and memoirs, as well as M. Yamani's (2004) anthropological reflections on the Hijaz, suggest that much of what has been described, at least in the memory of present-day Jiddawis, forms an important part of the local sense of the urban. To this would need to be added the re-enactment of a number of »customs and traditions« (*ʿādāt wa-taqālīd*) as well as »popular games« (*alʿāb shaʿbiyya*) through private initiatives as well as in the context of the annual festival »Jeddah ghayr« in Jeddah and the national »Janadriyya« festival held in the capital Riyadh; these confirm that many of the descriptions of urban life provided in this text seem crucial to the specific urban identity of Jeddah. This is obviously affected by nostalgia as well as influenced by present-day concerns about Saudi identity and its (dis)contents. In this sense, any reconstruction of historical »urbanity« can hardly be more than a reasonable re-creation of a plausible narrative accounting for social relations in a concrete space, the city.[5]

Whether called cityness or urbanity, Jeddah's specific urban culture and awareness provides this coral-stone city with its own urbanity (Zijderveld 1998; Sassen 2005).

Urbanity as a production of the civic sphere (Tripoli, Tunis, Aleppo, Cairo) // *Nora Lafi*

According to the civic chronicle of the city of Tripoli in Ottoman times (*Yawmiyât*), written by Hasan al-Faqih Hasan, a member of the local *jamaa al-bilâd*, the municipal council composed of notables of the most important Muslim families of the city and of a representative of the Jewish community (*sheikh al-yahûd*), all decisions regarding public spaces were written down after the deliberations of the council. Be it for the maintenance works in a street, for an order given to a shopkeeper not to invade public space, or for the organization of the market, urban space and its governance were a matter of civic competence, that is, a matter in which deliberation by a group of persons who institutionally embodied the city and its values was a key element.

In Aleppo, Tunis, and Cairo, in spite of local variations of the form of the local assembly, the governance of the urban space was also the responsibility of a collective urban civic body. The civic sphere, in such contexts, was, of course, not democratic or egalitarian in nature – an anachronistic concept in this historical context. It was limited to a small number of notables. These notables, however, were supposed to answer to more general principles (such as the Islamic precept of the *hisba*) and represented larger groups: guilds, confessional communities, traders' associations, the populations of their respective neighbourhood, and the members of their confessional communities. This dimension of civic spirit was key in the very definition of the city and in the constitution of urbanity as its spatialized materialization.

Contemporary debates on urbanity generally ignore this period however, theorizing mostly on the evolution of the notion between modern and post-modern definitions. They often focus also on the threat that the present-day commodification of urban spaces represents.[6] This probably has a precise historiographic cause: reflections on urbanity were launched on a new basis following the statement by Henri Lefebvre, according to which the Industrial Revolution and the capitalistic form of urban development had favoured an urbanization without urbanity (Bocquet 2012). In other words, cities were deprived of a vivid civic sphere that could, in a Marxist perspective, constitute the basis of a revolutionary mobilization. The sometimes paradoxical and contradictory convergence of interpretations of this Lefebvrian statement with critics of cities built during the age of modern architecture and urban planning (1920s–1960s) led to what one can sum up as a post-modern vision of urbanity (Boudreau 2010). In this context, debates also evolved in the direction of a reflection on how a post-modern approach to urban planning could correct the lack of urbanity of existing cities and create new spaces that would embody and enhance urbanity. Critical approaches against commodification trends arose in this context. Urbanity, from this perspective, sometimes looks like an endangered value. This diagnosis prompted some to advocate for a renewed civic pact around the values of urbanity (Zijderveld 1998). In such visions, history is often seen as a place in which the true extension of urbanity is to be found. It is, however, often limited to a short range, or to a given stable object, subject to culturalist inter-

5 This approach is inspired by Fischer-Nebmaier's (2015) reflection on how to narrate the city.

6 See, for example, the review of recent literature proposed in Hannigan and Richards (2017). See also Beuscart and Peerbaye (2003) and Rowe (2010).

pretations. Urbanity, in other words, is too often seen as a »Western« quality. Research on cities in various parts of the world, and specifically in the Ottoman Empire, however, proves this view is incorrect. This is why it is important to connect reflections on urbanity to critical research not only on the nature of present trends, or on the meaning of considerations on the modern or Fordist city, but also on what constituted urbanity in precise and different historical contexts. My experience of research in cities of the Arab world suggests we examine another root of urbanity, whose nature can help challenge existing clichés.

An easy approach to the notion of urbanity would be to define it according to two logics. Urbanity would be their point of encounter. One is the organization of cities according to principles of civic common good, with the preservation of public spaces in which diversity and social or commercial vitality could develop. The other refers to a kind of urbanity from below, in which the character of what makes a city is inherent in the people and their capacity to engage in public spaces and develop logics of appropriation. My perception is that a more efficient definition sees urbanity as more than a point of encounter: the civic dimension comes not only from the appropriation by the people of what comes from the top. Urbanity is the result of the civic dimension being at the heart of the very organization of the city. Urbanity from the top and from below are, in a way, the same thing. When they are not, urbanity is not really urbanity: it can be order, it can be vitality, but not necessarily urbanity.

Paradoxically, be it for historical contingencies in times of troubles or for the existence of a strong horizon of expectation in society, I mainly studied urbanity in the Arab world during moments and places when and where it was in deep crisis. My idea, however, is that the study of such times of crisis allows one to understand the nature of what makes urbanity.

I studied, for example, the logics of violence and repression in Cairo during the period of the French occupation of 1798–1800 (Lafi 2015). The forced removal of all the gates of all neighbourhoods was one of the main measures by occupation troops aimed at controlling the urban space. During the revolts, barricades were built by the population in order to close the neighbourhoods again. I read this spatialized manifestation of a civic mobilization as an indication, even in times of crisis, of the neighbourhood being a basic civic unit in which urbanity was the social construct embodying the relationship between society and space. I also came to the same kind of conclusion through my study of Aleppo during the 1819 revolt (Lafi 2014) and of Tunis during the 1857 riots (Lafi 2016a): urban space was more than a passive decorum: it was the socially constructed manifestation of an urban civic sphere. Reflecting on Cairo, Aleppo, and Tunis since 2011, following my experiences of field research (Lafi 2016b, 2017a),[7] I was also able to trace some of these logics: during the demonstrations on Bourguiba Avenue in Tunis, during the occupations of Kasbah Square or Tahrir Square, through the protection measures some neighbourhoods took against looters and *agents provocateurs* working for the police of the regime in Tunis, through the constitution of local deliberative meetings in public space in, for example, both Tunis and Cairo. Neighbourhoods have been, since medieval times, the basic unit of social life. Urbanity, however, was also an expression of something bigger, at the scale of the city itself. It is only when urbanity at this scale is in crisis that smaller units tend to function separately.

On the basis of this diagnosis of the existence of a strong civic link between society and space, with the intuition that this might constitute the core of a possible definition of urbanity that could challenge Eurocentric visions and historical perspectives limited to modern times, I tried to examine the constitutive elements of urbanity outside of moments of crisis. As far as the cities I studied are concerned, my idea is that urbanity was an expression of the very nature of cities as civic collective bodies. Urbanity was the spatialized manifestation in everyday life of this sphere. The civic sphere was the result and expression of the very organization of urban society (Lafi 2018). It was in the hand of local notables, whose definition could vary from city to city, but who generally belonged to the most powerful guilds and families. Their legitimacy as notables was defined not only from top, but was also due to their influence in their respective neighbourhoods. Moral values and duties were attached to their influence and power and ordinary people had access to forms of protest when notables did not respect the civic and moral pact. Such forms of counter-control could range from informal encounters with the chief of the neighbourhood or the chief of the city, to formal petitions, or even to riots and rebellions. The notables controlled the old forms of municipal power. A civic chronicle (*yawmiyât* or *hawadith*), written by the secretary (*katib*) of the municipal council played the role of public annals. Through the petitioning system, all inhabitants were entitled to have their rights respected, or at least to claim for justice. Such rights, collective or personal, had been written down in a charta (all can be found at the central archives of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi – BOA – and in local archives) at the moment of integration into the empire (recognition of cities as collective bodies, rights of

7 For methodological considerations on field research and the perception of urbanity, see Söderström (2010).

guilds and of the confessional communities). This civic sphere was based upon moral principles of Islamic inspiration, summarized in treatises called *hisba*, which commended officials and inhabitants to act for the common good (*al-maslaha al-'amma*) and forbid what was defined as wrong. There were, locally, many guidebooks for public officials summarizing these principles. Such principles were also spatialized through the competences of the notables and their institutions on the urban space: public infrastructures (often under the form of civic foundations – *waqfs*), control of building rights, building safety, public space, market order, security, confessional balance, factional cohabitation. I argue here that these elements were, in classical Ottoman times, constitutive of urbanity, that is, the manifestation in the urban space of a set of values aiming for public and common good as well as for cohabiting patterns. In spite of Eurocentric definitions implying this kind of quality did not apply to urban spaces and societies outside of Europe, research proves the contrary.

This civic sphere anchored in early modern times poses, of course, the question of modernity and modernization. It also poses the question of equality, in a system that organized inequality around moral principles and the question of possible divergent manifestations of urbanity outside of the dominant system. In late Ottoman times urban modernization was as much a reform of this system as an importation of foreign ideas. Modern municipalities (*belediye* or *baladiya*) were created on the basis of existing municipalities of the old system (Lafi 2005). This posed, however, the question of the transcription of values attached to the very ontology of the old into a modern system. Hence the growth of tensions, in the context, also, of geopolitical instrumentalizations of modernization processes. Urbanity, however, also exists beyond this dimension.

In order to understand this aspect, I tried to find some interpretive inspiration in the study of a present-day spontaneous market in the heart of a destroyed part (Kherba) of the Medina of Tunis (Lafi 2017b). I saw there alternative and resilient manifestations of urbanity, such as the link between the popular organization of the urban space and values connected to the civic dimension, whose interpretation can be connected to broader reflections in the field of critical urban studies (Groth and Corijn 2005). In the end, I think that such elements are an invitation to challenge two dominant paradigms in reflections on urbanity. One is the limitation to the industrial/post-industrial or modern/post-modern horizon. What a study of cities of the early modern era illustrates is how urbanity was the spatialized manifestation of values linked to the urban civic sphere, to the urban system of governance, and to the very functioning of urban societies. The other pertains to the culturalist bias that remains present in literature even by authors who critically challenge the notion and propose reinterpretations that focus on the civic dimension. What I found in my study of the Ottoman Empire was an invitation to challenge Anton Zijderveld's views on urbanity as being intrinsically linked to European or »Western« cities (Zijderveld 1998). The inertia of the Weberian culturalist dichotomy on the nature of urban societies, but also on the capacity of societies to develop a civic sphere, can be challenged on the basis of a precise examination of past systems of governance in the Ottoman world and of the vitality in some places and contexts of manifestations of the existence of a civic sphere. This alternative vision of urbanity, hence, might be proposed as a double interpretive challenge, in connection with other critical visions of urbanity in the region (Adham 2008; Fawaz 2009).

Exploring urbanity at night on a motorbike // *André Chappatte*

In the savanna that crosses northern Côte d'Ivoire, street lighting is an important marker of a locality's urban identity. In this remote region of West Africa, locals often say that a locality is a town because of the life brought by the domestication of the night through street lighting. In provincial towns of the region, for instance, shops and activities are buzzing until midnight under street lighting. Villages do also have a night life; however, not to the extent that it can be called an »everynight« life. In this regard, locals' sense of urbanity stems from the presence of a regular night life brought by the infrastructure of street lighting. Starting from this observation, local conceptions of urbanity therefore imply a sensorial dimension: the interplay between the darkness of the night and the brightness of street lighting.8 Arguing for an ethnographic approach, this section explores urbanity beyond its Western trajectory.

In Odienné, the urban at night is characterized by limited, patchy, and dim street lighting along the main streets while inner streets are shrouded in darkness (for a Malian example, see Chappatte 2014b). Inspired by a phenomenological approach to experience, the way urban spaces are sensed alters when darkness falls. The urban night, beyond proximity, is often felt as a shadow play because the interplay between the darkness of the night and the light of electricity reveals the »silhouettes« of people's activities but rarely their

8 For the anthropologist Till Förster, the issue is not the concept of urbanity per se, but the inappropriateness of studying the urban beyond the Western world with a theoretical framework (e.g. class, neo-patrimonialism, individualism) inherited from a Western historical trajectory of the social (Förster 2013). With regard to African cities, Förster hence suggests that urbanity, understood as the very nature of interactions in the urban, »unfolds in the dialectics of both encounter and distanciation« (244).

»faces«. Inspired by Hall's foundational study of proxemics in his book *The Hidden Dimension* (1966),[9] I consider urbanity at night to be a specific socio-sensory perception of activities within the urban space. I tackle this line of enquiry by exploring the interplay between distance and sensorium in the identification of activities when crossing the town of Odienné at night on a motorbike. At the end, I attempt to reflect upon urbanity at night in terms of a distinct ambiance conducive to three main sets of experiences.

As part of the research project »Odienné by night«[10] I made a second visit, of a few months in 2015, to this provincial town of northern Côte d'Ivoire. Once in early evening I ate dinner with local trader Yacou in a restaurant located at a busy intersection.[11] While watching the movements around, he made a remark that offered insight into the way he lived urbanity at night in this town: »During the daylight we are all in the same movie; we work and seek money. When the night falls every one follows his/her own movie.« Although central, this intersection remained lit, albeit dimly, by street lighting; I thus initially thought that his remark referred to the opacity of the flow of vehicles and people passing by this intersection. A year later, when I was preparing my input for the interdisciplinary workshop on the concept of urbanity (July 2016) for the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) research group »Cities as Laboratories of Change«, Yacou's remark came to my mind wrapped in fresh thoughts; I started to consider it in connection with his activities in town.

Yacou was a seller of *friperie* (second-hand clothes) known in Odienné as skillful at selecting trendy and elegant clothes out of incoming bales. As he did not have a shop to display his goods, he used to travel directly to his customers by motorbike day and night. In 2015, for instance, he was carrying a bundle of clothes while hanging out with friends at *grin* (informal meeting spots) and bars called *maquis* after dusk.[12] When a customer called him, he grabbed his bundle of clothes, took it on his motorbike, and drove across the town to meet them. He might make such transactions several times per evening. Yacou was thus well informed about what was going on after dusk in the various districts of the town thanks to his nocturnal business trips on motorbike.

The way one moves within a town also shapes one's perception of its urbanity. The motorbike is a vehicle well adapted to a town of the size and road infrastructure of Odienné. It allows one to cross the whole of Odienné as well as travel narrow side streets and gain a detailed knowledge of various areas of the town. A car could hardly do so due to the bad conditions of some inner streets; its considerable purchase price, furthermore, makes it a rare, elite means of transport in smaller towns of West Africa, due to their limited gentrification in comparison to bigger towns. Walking by night in Odienné is mostly reserved for short distances (i.e. from home to a kiosk within the same district[13]) because of security reasons (i.e. fear of darkness), reputation (i.e. cost of suspicion associated with nocturnal strolls), and the considerable size of the town. Since the early 2000s the motorbike made in Asia has become the most popular means of mechanized transport in the provincial towns of northern Côte d'Ivoire due to its affordability, mobility on sandy roads, and practicality and comfort for short journeys.[14] In Odienné these motorbikes have even supplanted the car as taxi since the turn of the century. Besides, motorbikes allow their riders and passengers to become attuned to Odienné's night life in all its loosely knit diversity.

Shadow play along a nocturnal ride

My friend Omar, for instance, gave me a lift by motorbike from a kiosk located in the peripheral and northern district of Heremakono to a venue situated in the opposite side of the town (see Figure 2). I took notes on the trajectory of this ride during which we, in a significant way, encountered silhouettes of people engaged in numerous activities but were unable to see all their faces. I was eating a plate of spaghetti at the kiosk (see A in the plan) while waiting for Omar; the kiosk benefited from a nearby street lamp thanks to its strategic location along the sole tarred road of this district. My friend joined me around 9pm. When we started the motorbike, we saw a silhouette of a woman passing by; the nearby street lamp revealed her skin-tight jeans and her figure. She was then hailed by a group of young men drinking tea in a *grin* overlooking the street. She did not stop. My friend laughed: »Young women pace at night to show their body shapes«. In this part of Muslim West Africa, the night is traditionally perceived as the realm of men. Unless attending *halal* (licit) events (e.g. attending a nocturnal public sermon, visiting a sick person), women, especially spouses, remain within the confines of their house when darkness

9 »Proxemics is the term I have coined for the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture« (Hall 1966, 1).

10 My postdoctoral studies at ZMO Berlin were funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF).

11 All first names mentioned in this text are pseudonyms.

12 For an analysis of the origins of *maquis* in West Africa, see Chappatte (2014b; for a socio-spatial analysis of maquis in Odienné, see Chappatte (2018).

13 The *kiosque* (kiosk) is a kind of popular restaurant and small grocery in Côte d'Ivoire.

14 In Mali, the arrival of Chinese motorbikes in early 2000s turned the motorbike into a popular urban good (see Chappatte (2014a, 30).

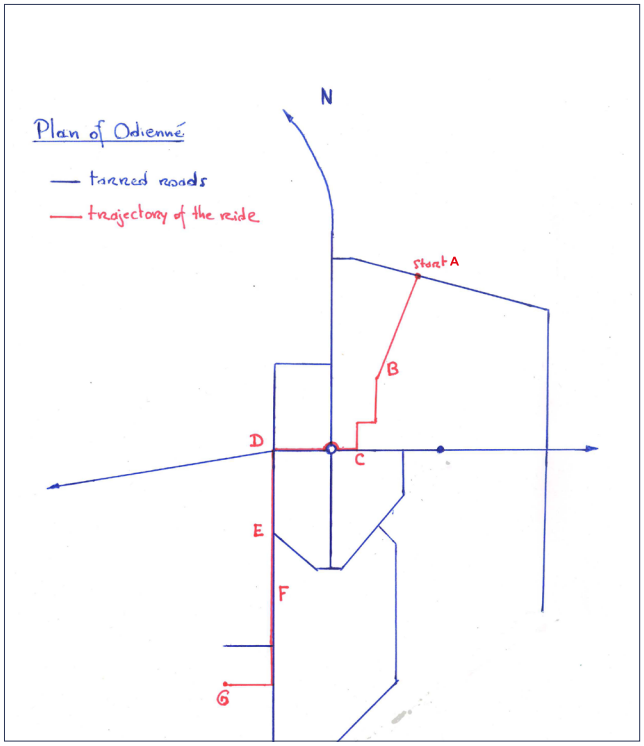

Figure 2: Hand-made plan of Odienné.

falls. Men, due to increasing difficulties in making ends meet, have, however, recently allowed more and more women to set up small restaurants along the streets at night. But an unrecognized female taking a nocturnal stroll (*yaala*) always raises the suspicion she has loose morals, which is not the case with an unrecognized male in the same situation. We then headed towards the district of Libreville. We left the tarred road to take a shortcut which goes through *le marigot* (see B in the plan), a humid area of vegetation which was avoided by many at night due to its remoteness and lack of lighting. Only the presence of daring lovers could be detected there after dusk. We then entered the older district of Libreville from one of its numerous unlit sandy streets. Taking a bigger street, we saw a group of children playing football under one of the rare street lamps still lit along this street section. Further down, we then noticed the shadow of a couple sitting flirting on a motorbike in an unlit side street and the sound of what my friend called »the music of Wassoulou« (a rural region of south-west Mali). Approaching the source of this sound we soon thereafter perceived, in front of a courtyard, the contours of pointed hats and wide tops of a few traditional hunters dancing around a fire; a ngoni player was performing for them. We then turned right and next left to pass by the biggest mosque of Odienné – the main minaret of which can be observed from afar at night due to the powerful floodlights that illuminate it.

We then joined the double lane tarred road (see C in the plan) that marks the border between the district of Libreville and the district of Central. It should be one of the brightest sections of the town thanks to its double line of street lighting and its proximity to *le rond-point central* (central roundabout)[15] around which powerful companies, such as Air Côte d'Ivoire, have their offices. Many of these lamps, however, did not work, due to »poor maintenance«, according to locals. Lights of shops along and vehicles circulating on the street made activities in the vicinity nonetheless recognizable. People chatted in *grins*, or gathered in front of the TVs of kiosks; the street façade was otherwise punctuated by small restaurants run by women who were taking the opportunity to make some extra cash at night. Just before arriving at the central roundabout we passed by the restaurant and supermarket Chez Barry; its owner, from Guinea, had settled in town 30 years before as a mere kiosk worker and had become, over the years, one of the wealthiest merchants in the town. Going around the roundabout, we noticed a crowd sitting in plastic chairs neatly arranged in front of the office of the influential Orange telecommunication provider. They were facing three men in white robes seated around a table; one of them held a microphone. An Islamic sermon was about to start.

We then took the second exit on the right to reach, 100 metres further on, an intersection popularly called *le carrefour de la pâtisserie* due to the presence of a modern bakery-restaurant on one of its corners (see D in the plan). The façade of its catering area had initially been open to the public gaze. Bearing in mind the predominantly Muslim identity of locals, this visibility meant that alcoholic beverages are not sold there. However, we barely glimpsed those within; canvas blinds had recently been added to its open façade due to a demand for more discretion. This restaurant was said to attract extra-conjugal Muslim couples who did not want to meet up in recreational places where alcoholic beverages are sold, such as *maquis*. As a matter of fact, the catering area conspicuously overlooked one of the main intersections of the town, which is flanked by small restaurants, a kiosk, and the *grin* of a powerful political party. We then turned left to take the central axis towards the south. This tarred road is usually busy during the day because it passes the big market of the town and the so-called »King Cash Carrefour«[16] (see E in the plan) before leading to the main exit of the town where most of the traffic to the forest and coastal regions of Côte d'Ivoire converge. The road section passing by the big market, although central, was shrouded in darkness after dusk due to poor maintenance of street lighting; shops were

15 A local told me that the town of Korhogo is more developed than Odienné because »it has more roundabouts«.

16 King Cash is the name of an important chain of supermarkets in Côte d'Ivoire; it recently opened a branch in this intersection in Odienné. In 2015, there were no other supermarket chains in Odienné.

closed and sealed off with wire or wooden fencing in this commercial area. We encountered a couple of human silhouettes in this section during our nocturnal ride. These people were definitely not there for shopping! We then reached the King Cash Carrefour. At night, this intersection was known to host the sole three kiosks in town that are open all night. One of them is called Le 24 Heures (The 24 Hours). We predictably saw a group of moto-taxis parked next to Le 24 Heures, the only around-the-clock parking spot for moto-taxis in town. Some riders decided to work exclusively during the night because the price for a moto-taxi increases then (especially after midnight). I hailed my friend, who worked at Le 24 Heures, while passing through. I did not, however, see his head behind the counter. He was probably resting within the kiosk, saving his energy for peak time, that is to say after midnight.

We then continued our way on this axis, which was better lit since passing the King Cash shop; I still wonder whether this discrepancy of maintenance was due to the fact that 100 metres ahead stood the imposing building of the Compagnie Ivoirienne d'Electricité (CIE),[17] the military camp of Odienné, and the offices of a few other state services. We made a quick stopover at the *maquis* 225 (see F in the plan) located in front of the military camp on the other side of the tarred road. The owner, a friend of mine, was hosting a welcoming party for new employees of the Education Nationale who were in town. For this he bought bottles of Limoncello at King Cash, as his guests were Christians from southern Côte d'Ivoire. The *maquis* 225 was a partially open space characterized by an observable but dark sitting area. The localization of lighting along the street meant the silhouettes of clients within the *maquis* were visible from the street, but not their faces. From within the *maquis*, however, clients could recognize people walking down the street because the footpath was right under the light of the lamps. After having greeted my friend and his guests, we continued to the district of Texas because I wanted to attend the second edition of »Odienné Fashion Day«, hosted in the nightclub La Primature (see G in the plan).[18]

Street ambiance at night: a protean (sensory) haziness

A rider and their passenger, when crossing the town by night, encounter traces of people's activities, among which some are undecipherable. This experience of urbanity at night is framed by a specific socio-sensory perception of what lies at a detectable distance. At night (human) senses' ability to inform from afar alters. Here I am concerned with the eyes, the ears, and the nose, that is to say »the distance receptors« (Hall 1966, 40),[19] insofar as these senses convey cues to identify the actors and nature of activities that happen within a detectable distance. By detectable distance, I mean a distance in which people feel the presence of others but are not close enough to engage in a conversation with them, unless they raise their voice. In other words, the detectable distance is the distance at which people are able to attempt to identify potential incoming movements. In this regard, the sense of hearing increases its accuracy due to the decrease of labour activities after dusk; the silence of the night sharpens up the audibility of any small noise. The ears inform on the nature of an activity, such as the approach of a car through the noise of its engine. However, the ears, most of the time, transmit very partial information to identify a presence at night; the noise of an engine, for instance, does not tell us who is driving the vehicle (unless of a specific vehicle). The ears hence detect a presence from afar but barely any decisive information on its identity. There is the presence of odour (or fragrance) in the air, but this presence remains vague with regard to the localization of its source when it is at a detectable distance. The presence of other odours further complicates this localization. The senses of hearing and olfaction certainly detect presence of activities around; they nonetheless do not identify their actors as eyes do. In the end, the retinal image remains the crucial component in the perception of identity (i.e. a policeman, my friend Moussa, a stranger), which is »filled in« with other sense (see Hall 1966, 66–67). At night, however, the senses of sight loses its accuracy to identify people (and things) from afar. Thanks to street lighting, eyes certainly detect presence(s) from afar but barely more than this; the interplay between the darkness of the night and the light of electricity bring to the fore the issue of identification by creating a closer distance of discretion, such as illustrated with the *maquis* 225. As the Ivorian Zouglou group Espoir 2000 stressed in a 2014 song: »At night all the cats are grey.«[20] At night, the detectable distance becomes a grey area in which presences are barely identifiable. Yacou, when crossing the town by night on a motorbike, thus realizes that *when the night falls every one follows his/her own movie*. The twilight and quietude that cover the urban at night shape a distinct street ambiance. At a detectable distance senses notice the presence of sil-

17 Ivorian Electrical Company.

18 For an analysis of the district of Texas as the centre of Odienné by night, see Chappatte (2018).

19 The sense of touch comes to the fore at night as means of close communication.

20 »*La nuit tous les chats sont gris*.« I am grateful to my friend and colleague Abdoulaye Sounaye for having raised this during the reading of my paper for the workshop »Sermon in the City« at ZMO in 2014.

houettes with flat and empty faces; people's social experience of night life completes the drawing of the facial features. Such sketchy street ambiance gives room to the imaginary. At the end of our conversation Yacou added the following comment with a crooked smile: »During the daylight we all seek the shadow of the same tree, whereas at night the shadow is everywhere.« The former word shadow indicates that the heat of the sun urges people to take cover under the few trees in town. During daylight hours the shadow is, above all, tangible. The latter word shadow, however, expresses the protean sensory haziness that arises from street ambiance at night. Does this urban penumbra arouse bodies and minds in specific ways? From praying to God in the silence at dead of night to following sexual fantasies into the purple darkness of a brothel, passing by listening to the programme *Confidentialités* at 10pm on a local radio or fearing witches that lurk in the blind darkness of the night, this ambiance of twilight gives rise to a phenomenology of mystery in which both evil and godly forces arouse human vulnerability (fields of shameful desires, spiritual calls, and occult threats) and lead to intimacy in many ways. The acolytes of the urban night live it as a potentially risky, unsettling, but educative path. Living the socio-sensory urban night is about opening oneself up to an ethical resonance which is as bottomless as its darkness.

Conclusion: Picturing the city from below: the persistence of urbanity

The presented four case studies explain urbanity as being shaped by more than metrics, important though these are. The studies speak to each other in their interrogation of urbanity as being shaped by urban space and its infrastructure (the wall, neighbourhoods, roads, flyovers, and street lighting), the residents of the urban space in question and their behaviours, daily rhythms, emotions, and sensory experiences, *and* the governance techniques that emerge from »above«. In Freitag's case study on nineteenth-century Jeddah, it is the walls of the city, built and maintained by the government and residents, which define where and how urbanity is constituted. In Chappatte's study of nightlife in Odienné, the residents' definitions of urbanity, in particular nocturnal urbanity, are shaped by infrastructural investment in street lighting by the state. In Alimia's study of Peshawar, historically the city was built and governed by pre-colonial and colonial directives, whilst in the post-colonial increasingly neoliberal state the city is transformed by state and national and multinational capital, such as the development project of the flyover – factors which give the city its »charisma« and bring it to life. While, in Lafi's study of various Ottoman cities, the presence of local and central government is never too far away from the surface and contributes towards the making of Ottoman subjects. Yet, ultimately, it is the voices, actions, sensations, emotions, and experiences »from below« that bind this programmatic text together.

In all the cases discussed it is the residents of the urban spaces in question who take centre stage. Each case reveals how urbanity is understood as a set of behaviours, a way of life, acts, and perceptions, and how urbanity evokes a series of emotions and sensations felt by its residents, which are tied to urban life as well as the spaces that define the town/city itself. Understanding urbanity from below pushes the scholar to build on and move beyond the administrative map, policy papers, or governance techniques, and reveals how individuals and groups define and live urbanity itself. Chappatte's study suggests that urbanity has different temporalities. In a provincial town, the interplay between the darkness of the night and the brightness of street lighting transforms experiences of urbanity; it creates an ambiance of twilight and shadow play which invite the acolytes of the urban night to explore intimacy. In Lafi's section, city dwellers are shaped by and participate in shaping a civic and collective rationale. There is such a thing as moral values and duties that bind residents and officials towards a »common good«. This is also visible in Freitag's Jeddah, where it is the residents themselves who co-finance urban infrastructure. In addition, for the Jiddawis, the urban way of life is marked by coffeehouses (for men), work, and trade. Meanwhile, for women, it consisted of household work, but, depending on class, also on work in the port and markets. It included socializing, family visits, and communal outings. Whilst in Alimia's case study in Peshawar, the city is a space of imagination, anonymity, and fun.

In addition, the readings of the city by residents bring the city itself to life, to possess a habitus, to become a living organism. In Alimia's Peshawar, residents speak in awe of Peshawar as having character and soul. Peshawar, one feels, is an old, wise, and loving friend, who embraces you into his fold with beauty, humour, monuments, and (socio-economic) potentials for the future. As the city lights up at night, one feels the city has a pulse. It is alive. Indeed, parallels are seen in Freitag's Jeddah, where, in her nod to local histories, residents within the confines of the walled city itself identify themselves as Jiddawis with pride.

Importantly, in this programmatic text, the bottom-up view of urbanity in »non-Western« settings does not negate urbanity. On the contrary, urbanity – as a set of behaviours, a way of life, civic interactions and a series of emotions and sensations of the town/city itself and its residents – appears to be continually relevant and in use in the local people. The view from below reveals localized understandings of urbanity – although defining them through

a series of metrics is often difficult or outright impossible. Urbanity is linked to forms of »civility«, »citizenship«, and »modernity« in their given contexts, histories, and times and are not only reserved for Western history (see Lafi's section). Even in the post-colonial state and society, localized understandings and practices of urbanity, modernity, and citizenship have emerged and are articulated in sophisticated ways by the subaltern classes that build on and transform these concepts from their initial colonial Eurocentric interactions.

In the case studies, urbanity is constantly juxtaposed with the rural (real or imagined) in implicit and explicit ways.[21] Urbanity in Lafi's section is marked by communal and civic actions, which often take different forms compared to rural areas. In Freitag's study, urbanity is shaped by life and a type of civility (*madaniyya*) found within the confines of the walled city, where the city is marked off from the »wilder« rural areas. In Alimia's section, the main protagonist juxtaposes life in the village and »tribal areas« as starkly uncouth when compared to Peshawar.

Across the sections urbanity is also marked by multiple social layers – of the ruling elites, the rich, the »middle« classes, and the poor. In addition, residents do not just come from the town or city in question, but connect with various specific locations within the town or city; they also consist of rural, regional, and international migrants. Layers of social differences and frequencies of exchange, which come to define what it means to live in the town or city, mark urbanity.

The urban experience is clearly not the same for everyone, even within a shared city, town, or quarter. The city is different in scale to the town (Odienné); the seaport city (Jeddah) is different to the land port city (Peshawar); the Ottoman cities differ from each other, each representing a particular expression of urbanity. Further, in Chappatte's section, the woman who is catcalled as she walks through the night has a different experience of Odienné's nightlife (perhaps one of fear) than the man who catcalls. Perceptions of urbanity are also informed by one's mode of transport. Moving around on a motorbike, versus moving around on foot, means different residents' access, feel, and understand the town in varying ways. In Lafi's section, the powerful guilds and families are often actors of forms of protest – petition, riots, and rebellion – if the rights that the residents expect are challenged. When urbanity as a value is in danger, protest is a form of civic mobilization that mirrors urbanity itself. In Freitag's study, the city is marked by different spatialities. Being a city of pilgrims and traders, certain areas enabled easy mixing between locals and foreigners (strangers) in official, and likely in social, interactions. Furthermore, Freitag highlights how the urban experience was often localized and restricted to certain quarters; men would mix on the squares and *mirkāz*, whilst women would visit each other's homes and stay in neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, poorer women would move beyond the city walls; something not possible for richer women. Alimia, in her section, shows how politicians improve the urban infrastructure and experience for the upper-middle and middle classes as a means to secure votes in elections.

There is then no universal and timeless blueprint that tells us what urbanity is. Yet local histories, ethnographic work, interviews, and archival analysis in North Africa and the Middle East, South Asia, and West Africa show us how the term persists and has salience in contemporary and historical times. The view from below reveals that urbanity is more than metrics. It adds a richness and complication to what we mean by »urbanity« and for whom, and it shows that to belong to a city or a town is to be shaped by a shared space and consciousness, even if these shared spaces are fragmented and not the same for everyone. Urbanity is also a way of life, a set of behaviours, a set of perceptions, and a series of acts. It evokes emotions and senses, which will vary from setting to setting and person to person. Indeed, it is perhaps this variation, this frequency of difference, these contradictions of experiences that help enrich our understanding of urbanity.

21 Consider, for example, as Alimia's section shows, the fact that Pakistan's rural areas are urbanizing at a fast pace and are not as »rural« as local vernaculars imagine.

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The Programmatic text is a cooperative work of members of the ZMO research area »Cities as Laboratories of Change«.

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ISSN 2191-3242

Design: Jörg Rückmann, Berlin